

Dear FCC Commissioners:

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed Comcast-NBC merger.

I am certain you have received many letters decrying the unprecedented control over media content and platforms this merger would hand to one company. I share others'™ concerns that the merger of the largest cable and Internet access provider will threaten competition and innovation and will prompt a new wave of media consolidation as other companies scramble to match Comcast-NBC's market power.

I direct my comments today toward my concern that allowing Comcast, a company that has proven itself hostile to unions, to expand through this merger will also stifle creativity, diminish the quality of programs on television and over the internet, and will negatively impact the economy. If an anti-union corporation gains the size and market share produced by the merger, it will have enormous leverage to dictate labor policies and practices that could negatively effect tens of thousands of highly skilled entertainment industry technicians, writers, and performers - not only those working for Comcast/NBC, but industry-wide.

Perhaps, you might argue that such labor issues are beyond the purview of your Commission and that they must be taken up with other government agencies. And technically, I know you are right. However, I hope you have the awareness to recognize that labor policies are closely intertwined with crucial questions regarding access to, and the quality, depth, and content of public communications in this nation and throughout the world. We have already seen what happens to the quality of entertainment when media channels opt for cheaply-produced programs requiring a minimum of unionized workers: a slate of ever-more degraded - and degrading - "reality" programs, which rely not on the creative and intellectual talents of well-trained professional artists, but on aesthetically unimaginative techniques, unmanned technology (stationary cameras, microphones, etc.) and untrained (often unskilled, undereducated, emotionally deprived, and sometimes morally depraved) "performers." These per!

formers, in turn, are held to highly restrictive contracts that offer, in many cases, little more compensation than the promise of "fame." This trend in programming has driven a shift in the entertainment industry in which skilled workers vie for an ever-dwindling number of stable jobs and have fewer opportunities to conceive and produce quality programming.

Please do not encourage a process by which the workforce in the entertainment industry, one of the remaining few in which the United States remains a primary PRODUCER (for both domestic and international consumption) and EMPLOYER, becomes another exploited, under-paid category of "service workers." Our national economy can not be sustained on the backs and wallets of poorly paid and uninsured workers (no matter how "creative"), and a healthy national cultural ethos can not

be sustained on a steady diet of entertainment garbage. Please recognize that these two issues are intertwined and that the Comcast merger will negatively impact both.

You may also argue that it is not your job to police or even shape the direction of popular entertainment, and I agree wholeheartedly with this position. Certainly, "reality" programs are popular and media companies have a right to produce them. But I would argue, such popularity less closely reflects the direct desires of viewers than the paucity of choices proffered by profit-minded media conglomerates. I do not advocate any form of censorship; conversely, I contend that failure to protect citizens from the Comcast merger will impede the potential for meaningful, creatively produced entertainment to reach large audiences, and will, in fact, aid a process of corporate censorship and help obstruct the free " and equal " flow of ideas.

We have seen that media ownership by multi-national conglomerates that oppose organized labor (and informed activist citizen groups in general) has resulted in abysmal news reporting on social and economic issues that effect us all; such reporting rarely highlights, and often demonizes, the efforts of citizens and workers to collectively affect changes, particularly those that might negatively impact the corporation's bottom line. Certainly, the mainstream media and corporate internet content providers consistently fail to report on crucial, far-reaching issues affecting the future of media access and content such as the proposed Comcast merger. Comcast's documented history of prioritizing its own online content and stifling the free flow of Internet traffic would certainly worsen and would further constrain the ability of citizens to learn about and respond to such issues.

I believe in the power and integrity of our representative democracy, through which you have attained your appointments on the Federal Communications Commission. In such an unwieldy, complex society, the individual citizen must rely upon you, our appointed stewards, to act on our behalf to protect our right of access to open, impartial channels of communication and our need for the quality programming essential to a functioning democracy. Without you, the individual (or even small citizen groups) is hard pressed to exact change in policies and programming enacted by a company with the size and power of Comcast, especially so if it is allowed to merge with the already colossal entity of NBC.

I beg you to assume the responsibility and power bequeathed to you via your appointments to this Commission to stop the Comcast merger, which will only foreclose efforts to assure better media in our communities and our democracy.

Sincerely,
Virginia Myhaver

